

Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 59
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St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Essexville, MI
Michigan State House
Committee on Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
December 12, 2012

I'm here today in no small part because Sally Grunder, an octogenarian from my congregation clipped a story from the Bay City Times earlier this year and handed it to me. The story was about Senate Bill 59.

Sally and I were shocked that anyone could possibly think making it legal to carry a concealed weapon in churches or any of the other currently protected areas as gun-free zones would be a good idea.

Our United Methodist Book of Resolutions in Resolution #3426 on Gun Violence states, "reflecting the traditional role of The United Methodist Church has been one of safety and sanctuary, every United Methodist church is officially declared a weapon-free zone."

I authored a resolution that was adopted by the Detroit Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (in May) stating that our churches and ministries will remain concealed weapon free zones regardless of changes made to the state law. That's more than 400 churches. The same resolution was presented and passed by the West Michigan Annual Conference (in June). That's another 400 churches.

I started a petition on SignOn.org calling our state legislators to keep gun free zones in Michigan. The petition now has more than 7663 signatures. Many have made comments to you our elected leaders. I leave them for your careful consideration.

While the available evidence about gun violence is enough to convince me that we need to keep gun free zones in Michigan. I am further convicted because of my faith in God and as a follower of the Prince of Peace. Placing our trust in guns is, in my opinion a form of idolatry and a symptom of irrational fear. This bill epitomizes the myth of redemptive violence and is unequivocally incompatible with the teaching and example of Christ who taught and lived an ethic of non-violent resistance.

SB 59 is a reckless bill. On behalf of 7665 plus petition signers, I urge you to defeat it here in committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.